



# KEEP UP FIGHT FOR PALESTINE

FIGHTING THE RIGHT'S LIE THAT THE LEFT IS ANTISEMITIC [>>PAGE 6](#)

STARMER'S LABOUR USES SMEARS TO INTIMIDATE ITS OPPONENTS [>>PAGE 6](#)

# Socialist Worker

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## PORTLAND PROTESTS SHOW THE POWER TO BEAT TRUMP



BLACK LIVES Matter organiser Teal Lindseth leads defiant protesters in Portland, Oregon. Donald Trump sent hundreds of federal officers to the city in a bid to terrorise demonstrators. [>>Pages 4&5](#)

## BORIS JOHNSON FEEDS US A DIET OF LIES

# TORIES ARE BAD FOR OUR HEALTH

THE TORIES are trying to slither away from the blame for coronavirus.

They don't want to talk about their murderous failures, or how poverty and racism shape death rates for the disease.

From them the talk of diets and lifestyles is designed to blame individuals not their system.

Don't let these killers off the hook.

[>>Page 3](#)

### PAY

NHS workers to march for a wage increase

HEALTH WORKERS are in revolt over the Tory refusal to give a pay rise to hundreds of thousands of people who work in the NHS.

Activists in London were set to protest on Wednesday of this week.

And pay protests are planned in more than 20 cities on Saturday 8 August.

[>>Page 20](#)

### JOBS



## 'Thrown on the scrap heap by the Tories'

THE TORIES are trashing the lives of millions of people by refusing to support them through the coronavirus crisis.

Workers facing poverty, unemployment and insecurity told Socialist Worker why they feel abandoned by their bosses and the government.

[>>Pages 10&11](#)

### INTERNATIONAL

The global virus spread is a warning against reopening

CORONAVIRUS continues to sweep across the globe, with understaffed and underfunded health services struggling to provide care.

Donald Trump's US is the most appalling example. There are also growing catastrophes in many other countries.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'A deeply thoughtful, kind, empathetic, quite self-effacing guy'**

Boris Johnson's former adviser Will Walden describes the man we don't see in public

**'I just wish her well, frankly'**

Donald Trump sends all the best to Ghislaine Maxwell, who faces charges of playing a role in the sexual exploitation of children

**'The Union is a fantastically strong institution'**

Boris Johnson celebrates the vote against Scottish independence in 2014

**'The lockdown could have spelled disaster, an economic tsunami that washed away hundreds of thousands of Scottish jobs'**

Boris Johnson celebrates the unity of the British state

**'Berlin 1936 marked the 1st Olympic torch relay to bring the flame to the cauldron. We can't wait for the next one in Japan'**

The Olympics social media accounts celebrate the games hosted by the Nazis



# Woman died weighing 3 stone after DWP stopped her benefits

A CANCER patient has died weighing just three stone after the Department for Work and Pensions stopped her benefits.

Christine McCluskey from Dundee suffered with a number of health conditions that meant she was housebound.

The Tories' regime had denied her disability benefits for four months before she died.

Christine, who suffered with Crohn's disease, arthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other problems was being fed through a feeding tube when her benefits were assessed in May 2018.

She was worryingly malnourished and had a cough.

Private contractor Independent Assessment



CHRISTINE McCLUSKEY was denied benefits

Service (IAS), previously Atos, conducted the benefits visit.

As a result of the assessment, the DWP cut Christine's Personal Independence Payments and removed her mobility car.

It refused to reinstate her benefits a month later, when she was diagnosed with incurable lung cancer.

Her daughter Michelle

but that this was not actually assessed on the visit.

She added that the stress of having to fight the DWP for her benefits contributed to the decline in her mother's health.

Christine weighed five stone, five pounds when she was assessed. When she died four months later she weighed just three stone.

Michelle took her mother's case to a tribunal and a judge reversed the benefits decision. But by that time, Christine had died.

Michelle is part of the Scrap 6 Months campaign, set up by charities. It demands that the government make it easier for terminally ill people to access benefits.

Currently people can only get fast track support if they are deemed as only having six months left to live.

**A BUSY road in London had to be shut for over 11 hours after ammunition fell off the roof of a police armed response vehicle.**

Cops were driving towards a firearms operation at the time.

The eastbound A13 near Prince Regent Lane in east London was closed on Wednesday of last week after a "quantity of ammunition and ancillary items" fell onto it, cops said.



Ruth May—stay away

## Did Tory leader get to choose vote districts?

AN INVESTIGATION has been called over allegations of gerrymandering against a Tory council leader in east London.

A 32-minute leaked recording of a meeting of Havering Tory councillors, shows leader Damian White discussing how he had influenced the local boundary review process so that it would be "politically advantageous" for the Tories.

White is heard telling Tory councillors, "for these four walls", that chief executive Andrew Blake-Herbert had "agreed for some reason to allow me to influence the proposals and, erm, I've been able to".



White added, "The [chief executive] has now agreed that we can have a governance committee meeting to discuss the four options, pick which one we like, make any recommendations or changes to it and that then goes to full council."

The matter was raised by Jon Cruddas MP and Havering Council monitoring officer has launched an investigation.

## Tesco cleans up as it sweeps out cleaners

AS BORIS Johnson fights to push more people into work, he claims bosses are making workplaces "Covid-secure".

In reality, corners are being cut that put workers at risk.

Last week Tesco announced it would get rid of cleaners in nearly 2,000 stores.

Instead, store staff will have to take on the cleaning from 24 August, including washing windows and floors.

Workers will also have to clean their own break rooms and toilets.

The move follows soaring sales for Tesco during the lockdown,



Finish that lot and get cleaning

rising by 8.7 percent in the three months to 30 May.

It also grabbed a business rates holiday worth £585 million from the Tories' emergency coronavirus support package.

Tesco has done so well out of the virus chaos that it was able to pay a £635 million dividend to shareholders this year.

## Does Sports Direct pay fair?

AN undercover investigation has suggested that Sports Direct could be paying below the minimum wage.

The *Guardian* newspaper placed an undercover reporter inside the firm's Shirebrook warehouse facility during two weeks in late June and early July.

The reporter recorded how warehouse workers at the site—which has been rebranded as Frasers Group—were unable to leave the building during their 30-minute unpaid breaks.

Some employment law experts say this should count as paid working



time and, if correct, would push hourly wage rates below the legal minimum of £8.72 to about £8.20.

Frasers Group said its warehouse workers did not have to be paid for the breaks and that the business had "no rule preventing staff leaving the warehouse during a rest break".

The *Guardian*'s undercover reporter asked three separate direct supervisors if he could leave the warehouse during his daily break.

All three said this was impossible and that the break should be spent in a staff canteen or on the smoking terrace.

## Years of NHS cuts hit hard

YEARS of under-investment in the NHS will hamper its ability to tackle the backlog of tests and required treatments that built up during the Covid-19 pandemic, research shows.

A new 31-country study found patients in Britain will face long waits for care and the rationing of treatment because the health service has so few staff and beds.

The research, by the Nuffield Trust health thinktank, found that Britain is near the bottom of the league table for health resources—staff, equipment and buildings—compared to a list of comparable countries.

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# Johnson peddles obesity line to deflect virus blame

by SARAH BATES

**THE TORIES** are getting stuck into their latest tactic to divert blame from their own fatal failings.

They claim to be focusing on the “time bomb” of obesity in the latest part of their battle against the coronavirus.

They want to shift the focus from the disproportionate deaths due to racism and poverty.

The government has said it will ban junk food adverts before 9pm. It also plans to launch a consultation on whether that should be extended to a blanket ban on adverts for sweets and fast food online.

Other measures include a ban on the sale of chocolates, crisps and sweets at checkouts, and instructing restaurants and pubs to display calories on their menus.

Even if the government’s desire to tackle obesity were genuine, these measures don’t address the issue.

Andrew Goddard, Royal College of Physicians president, said that obesity was “the result of biological, genetic and social factors”.

“There is a risk that we once again fall into the trap of mainly focusing on individual responsibility,” he said. “We’ve been down this path before and it doesn’t work.”

## Success

“We know the key to success in addressing obesity and other health inequalities lies in shared responsibility between individuals and the state.”

The government push came as it was revealed that poor people are twice as likely to die from Covid-19 (see below).

The government is heavily highlighting the narrative that being obese makes it more likely that people will be admitted to intensive care units with coronavirus. To



BORIS JOHNSON has told poor people to get on their bikes

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- Send ‘start’ to the number

## Coronavirus is class killer

CLASS AND wealth shapes who lives and who dies from coronavirus.

Areas with high levels of deprivation have double the Covid-19 mortality rates of more affluent areas, shocking new figures have revealed.

In England, areas where more poor people live suffered 140 deaths per 100,000 people between March and June—compared to 63 in wealthier places.

And the data released on Friday of last week showed that the gap

between mortality death rates is widening. The coronavirus death rates are following a more general pattern. Richer people live longer than poorer ones, and sometimes a lot longer.

In the least deprived areas, the mortality rate for all deaths—not just coronavirus—was 296 deaths per 100,000 population for the period March to June 2020.

In the most deprived areas, the rate was 92 percent higher.

**Charlie Kimber**

For a longer version go to [bit.ly/Poordeaths](http://bit.ly/Poordeaths)



Virus victim

## OPPRESSION

Covid-19 crisis hits women’s lives harder

THE FULL extent of the coronavirus crisis on working women was exposed last week in new research.

A survey of 19,950 mothers and pregnant women by the Pregnant Then Screwed campaign showed how the response to the pandemic is smashing apart women’s lives.

A majority of women—72 percent—have had to cut back on their work hours and 65 percent of mothers who have been furloughed say a lack of childcare was the reason.

Yet from 1 August, many women will be forced back into the workplace, despite a lack of available childcare.

Almost no holiday schemes for children will be running and many grandparents who shoulder some childcare responsibility will be shielding.

## Realities

Joeli Brearley, Pregnant Then Screwed founder said, “The government measures ‘completely ignore the realities facing women’.

“This lack of childcare is destroying women’s careers.

“They are being made redundant, they are being forced to cut their hours, and they are being treated negatively all because they are picking up the unpaid labour,” she said.

The sexist way that women are being treated by the Tory government shows the contempt that they have for ordinary people—and for the women that have borne the brunt of this crisis.

## IN THIS WEEK

# 2014

## Police murder of Michael Brown

Michael Brown, an 18 year old black man, was shot dead by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri.

His killing sparked protests for Black Lives Matter across the US.

# US federal forces rampage to put down BLM risings

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

PROTESTERS IN Portland, Oregon, have night after night fought back against repression by Donald Trump's federal troops.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests have taken place in the city for two months, sparked by the police murder of George Floyd. They have from the start faced attacks from the city police.

But more recently, protesters have been met with tear gas and been routinely beaten by federal officers deployed by the US department of homeland security.

Thousands of anti-racists continued the resistance across the weekend. "Portland is leading," said Chantelle Hershberger, an organiser with the Refuse Fascism campaign.

"They're showing what it looks like to stay in the streets despite police oppression, despite the federal forces being sent in.

"This kind of energy is actually what's needed."

## Fence

Early last Sunday morning, protesters broke down the fence that had been erected to protect the city's court house.

Throughout the day protesters remained defiant with thousands marking the two-month anniversary of George's Floyd's murder.

Protester Ronda Jordan said, "Frankly, I was afraid to come down here."

"But the more they come at us with federal officers, the more people are going to come out."

Many of the protesters are now taking up innovative tactics to protect themselves—some of which they learned from activists fighting repression in Hong Kong.

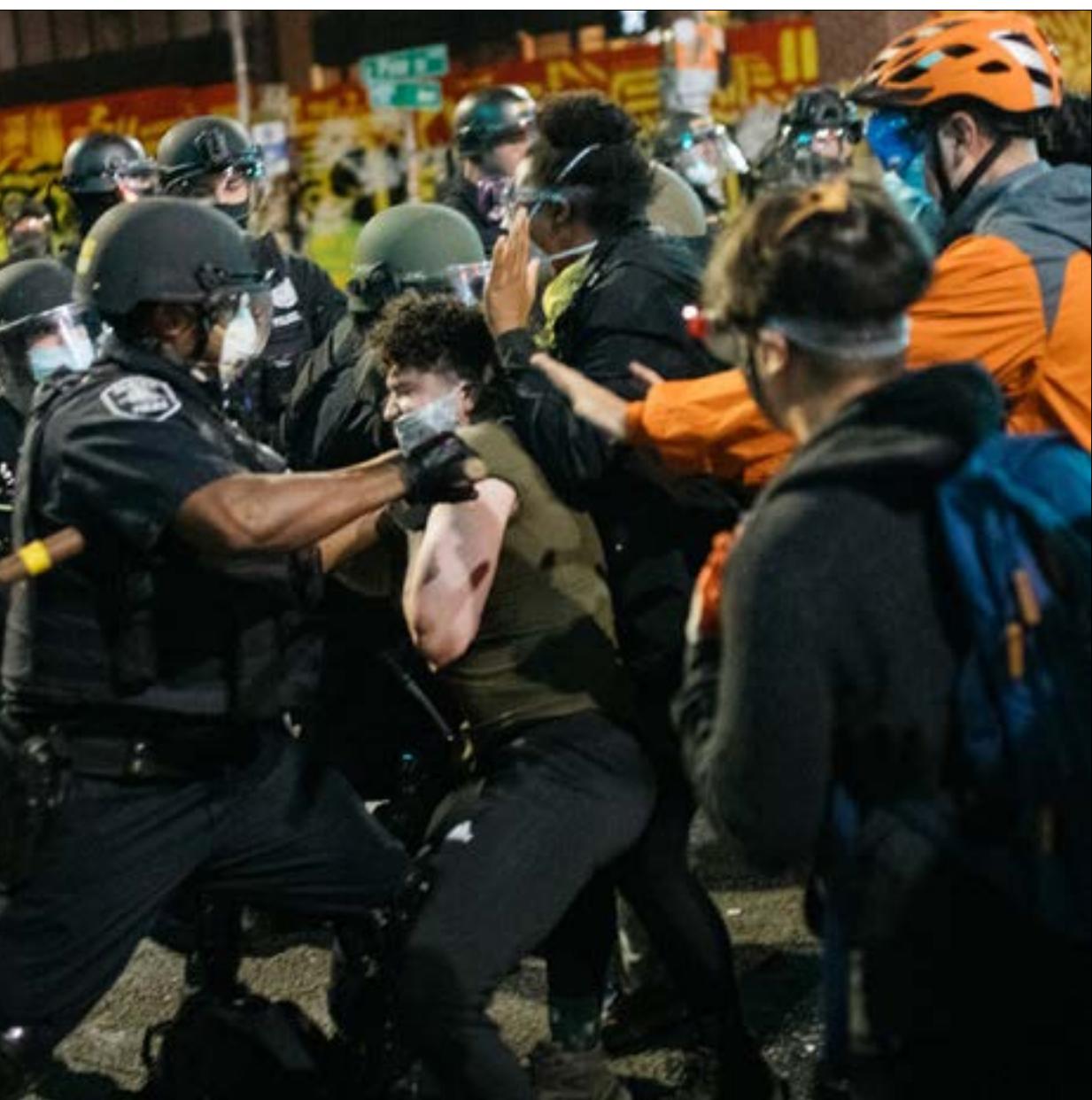
The fightback is not just in Portland.

In Seattle, the police used flashbang grenades and pepper spray against protesters last Saturday. But the resistance continued.

Carrying signs reading, "Feds Go Home," and chanting, "No justice, no peace," some among



Trump—in trouble



REPRESSION AND resistance on the streets of Seattle last weekend

## Trump hopes to save presidential campaign with police crackdowns

DONALD TRUMP hopes to use a tough law and order message to boost his re-election campaign.

He is spending more than £20 million on television advertisements depicting empty police stations and emergency calls reaching only answering services.

He claims this is what would happen if his Democratic rival Joe Biden becomes president.

And Trump is using the federal squads, which include officers from forces used against migrants and refugees, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Ice).

In the vanguard is the Border Patrol Tactical Unit. This was used earlier in the year to round-up migrants in ten cities where local governments have ordered police not to fully collaborate with federal immigration agents.

Trump's racist rhetoric fires up violence against protesters. In Austin, Texas, a protester was shot dead by a motorist. At a protest in Aurora, Colorado, a car was driven into demonstrators blocking a highway.

The fightback is not just in Portland. In Seattle, the police used flashbang grenades and pepper spray against protesters last Saturday. But the resistance continued.

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A federal riot cop grabs a protester in Portland, Oregon

but his strategy is a high-risk gamble.

Fifteen mayors of major US cities have banded together to denounce Trump for his move to call in federal agents to their cities.

New York mayor Bill de Blasio tweeted, "We've seen the chaos secret police are creating in

Portland. We won't let it happen here."

Blasio has also threatened to sue Trump if he sends federal troops into the city.

Mayor of Oakland, Libby Schaaf, said, "Oakland needs Covid-19 relief—not troops—from our president."

The US justice department inspector general also said that they will be conducting a review into how federal agents dealt with protesters in Lafayette Square, near the White House in Washington.

The splits in the ruling class are important because they create more spaces for protesters to organise.

But the mayors, and Biden, are no barrier to repression. Portland mayor Ted Wheeler was tear gassed by federal forces last week.

But he has also attacked protesters. Local police used tear gas multiple times before federal agents arrived in July.

Protesters last week held signs aloft that read, "Tear Gas Ted," in reference to Portland police's use of the weapon.



## Florida teachers resist unsafe return to school

THE biggest teaching union in Florida has filed a lawsuit to challenge an order to reopen schools next month.

The news came on Monday of last week, as the state reported over 10,000 new virus cases for the sixth consecutive day.

It is one of the worst-hit states in the US.

But its education commissioner has issued an emergency order requiring schools to be open at least five days a week from next month.

**Distance**  
And a majority would prefer to continue distance learning instead of returning to schools.

Some teachers and supporters have held protests demanding a delay to the start of schools reopening.

Placards read, "I can't teach from a coffin," and, "Until cases decline, stay online."

President Donald Trump has threatened to withhold federal

funding from schools that don't reopen. But he would need approval from Congress in order to hold back the money.

Education secretary Betsy DeVos went so far as to claim that "kids are actually stoppers of the disease" in an interview earlier this month.

Analysis by the Washington Post newspaper showed her claims to be based on a German study that has not been peer reviewed.

Trump and his business backers want a return to profit-making—and that means getting parents back to work. But there is resistance in many states.

The two biggest school districts—Los Angeles and San Diego—have said they won't allow students back to classrooms.

But it was reported last year that this increases to 40 times more likely when police use Section 60, which allows them to stop and search without "reasonable grounds" of suspicion.

Section 60 lets the police authorise stop and search across an area—often an entire borough.

And there has been a sharp rise in such authorisations in London—with 65 in May compared to 13 the previous month.

The Met's commissioner Cressida Dick was forced to admit that her force had stopped and searched over 20,000 young black men during the lockdown. That's

## Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

# TORIES WON'T TACKLE RACISM—THEY'LL FUEL IT

THE GOVERNMENT'S lie that it's "committed to tackling racism" has been exposed once again. The Metropolitan Police has increased its use of stop and search powers.

Some 1,418 people were stopped under Section 60 of the Public Order and Criminal Justice Act in May, more than double the figure for May 2019.

Black people were nine times more likely to be stopped and searched in England and Wales in 2017-18 under the police's regular powers.

But it was reported last year that this increases to 40 times more likely when police use Section 60, which allows them to stop and search without "reasonable grounds" of suspicion.

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The police issued 17,039 fines between 27 March and 25 May, according to the National Police Chiefs' Council.

Overall that amounts to around three fines for every 10,000 people. But that rate jumped to 4.6 fines per 10,000 for black people and 4.7 for Asian people.

These are just some instances of institutional racism fuelling the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in Britain.

Boris Johnson had to pay lip service to BLM, but has done nothing.

David Isaac, the Equality and Human Rights Commission head, said the government is "dragging its feet" on racism.

The Tories do have a coherent strategy—to divide working class people with racism while enriching those at the top of society.

They are pushing racist laws through parliament right now.

Their Immigration Bill makes Britain's immigration system even more racist and their Terrorism Bill gives the state more powers to target Muslims.

Faced with systematic racism, we need to continue the fight to uproot the system that produces it and relies on it.

# MAKE RICH PAY FOR CARE

THE TORIES are looking to any avenue to solve the crisis in adult social care without taxing the rich.

Ministers are considering a new plan that to make everyone over 40 years old pay more in tax or national insurance to plug the funding gap in social care services.

Covid-19 has exacerbated problems in social care caused by decades of privatisation and cuts.

But these plans won't do that.

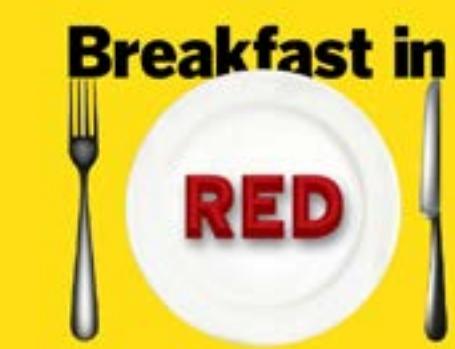
It's no strategy to pour massive investment into a system barely fit for purpose.

Instead of penalising the over-40 age group, the rich should fund public services.

The top ten entries on the latest Sunday Times Rich List have an estimated combined wealth of £131.1 billion.

This is the sort of money that could solve the crises not just in adult social care, but underfunding in the NHS, education and local government.

But the rich are not going to just hand it over—we will have to take it from them.



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## ANALYSIS

NICK CLARK



## Fight the claim that left is antisemitic

THE RENEWED assault on the left is bigger than Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party. Disgraceful accusations of antisemitism are flung almost indiscriminately at the whole of the left.

At the root of it is an attempt to claim that the left's opposition to Israel, and its support for Palestinians, is motivated by antisemitism.

One aspect of this is an attempt to conflate Jewish people with the state of Israel and its founding ideology Zionism.

The 2019 BBC Panorama documentary *Is Labour Antisemitic?* is an example of that.

Zionism is the idea that Jewish people should have a state of their own in Palestine, and that in this state they should be the majority.

It justified the ethnic cleansing of some 850,000 Palestinians from their homes when Israel was created in 1948. And it justifies the racist exclusion of Palestinians from Israel today.

Many Jews oppose Zionism because of this. Yet the documentary simply said that criticism of Zionism is "offensive to Jewish people because Zionism is the project that established Israel as a secure Jewish homeland".

It made Zionism appear as something integral to being Jewish, and therefore cast anti-Zionism as essentially antisemitic. The left's opposition to Israel was presented as the root of the problem—and clamping down on it the solution.

Linked to this is an attempt to proclaim anti-war and anti-imperialist politics in general as antisemitic.

The left often focuses on Israel because of its role as the chief military defender of the US's interests in the Middle East.

The US has given more money in aid to Israel than it has to any other country. It is increasingly in the form of military aid, fuelling the growth of the military that occupies Palestinian land.

In return, Israel defends the US's interests in the Middle East. US and Israeli officials frequently describe their relationship in these terms.

The right want to claim that highlighting this is an antisemitic conspiracy theory.

### Discredit

But the left opposes Israel because it's an integral part of the US's military domination of the Middle East that wrecks the lives of ordinary people, not because it's Jewish.

Such attempts to discredit anti-war and pro-Palestine politics as antisemitic are nothing new.

But they only really got any purchase once Labour's leadership under Jeremy Corbyn began giving ground to them. Now the right hope to cast other aspects of left wing politics as antisemitic too.

Antisemitic conspiracy theories, such as the idea that Jews control the banks and the media, have always been hallmarks of the far right. But now there's an attempt to attribute those ideas to the left as well.

After the grime musician Wiley launched an antisemitic tirade on Twitter last weekend, some commentators tried to link him to Corbyn.

And, a series of wild and unfounded accusations against the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) also went viral on Twitter over the weekend.

Claims that SWP members believe in "Jewish power over finance and the media" were shared by journalists and Labour politicians. None of them made any attempt to check if this was true.

But what the SWP actually believes didn't matter to them. The SWP was just a handy stand in for a caricature of the left the right wants to invent.

The Twitter furores are just the start. The outcome of all this has consequences not just for the left inside Labour, but for other aspects of the left's politics.

First and foremost, it will make it harder to campaign against Israel, but will also tarnish anti-austerity, class politics with the brush of antisemitism.

Resisting the assault means a fighting a battle that's much bigger than the Labour Party. It means unashamedly defending the politics of anti-Zionism and Palestine solidarity.



SMEARS BY the Labour right aim to make it more difficult to campaign for Palestine

## Smears used by the Labour right to marginalise the left

**RIGHT WING** politicians, journalists and supporters of Israel have launched a new attack on the left after the Labour Party apologised to people who labelled it antisemitic.

Threats of legal action against the Labour Party and its former leader Jeremy Corbyn have come with renewed attempts to discredit left wing politics as inherently antisemitic.

BBC journalist John Ware, who made the Panorama documentary "Is Labour antisemitic?" has said he will sue Corbyn over his response to the film.

The documentary, which aired in 2019, argued that left wing—and specifically pro-Palestine—politics encouraged antisemitism to grow inside Labour (see left).

It also argued that because of this, Corbyn's leadership failed to deal with accusations of antisemitism against Labour members.

Labour, under Keir Starmer, apologised last week for criticising the documentary when it was aired.

The party also paid out a figure of around £180,000 to Ware and former Labour staffers who appeared in the documentary, in an out of court settlement.

The apology and settlement effectively concede the documentary's accusation that Corbyn's left wing politics fuelled antisemitism.

In written apologies, Labour said, "Antisemitism

has been a stain on the Labour Party in recent years.

"If we are to restore the trust of the Jewish community, we must demonstrate a change of leadership."

Ware is now suing Corbyn after he described the decision to apologise as "a political, not a legal one," which "risks giving credibility to misleading and inaccurate allegations about action taken

to tackle antisemitism in the Labour Party in recent years."

The right want to smash the left at all levels of the party. Two councillors in Brighton quit the Labour Party after being investigated for antisemitism.

One, Kate Knight, had shared articles on Facebook by Jewish Voice for Labour, and the Jewish Socialists Group, which disputed that

Labour has a problem with antisemitism.

Another, Nikkie Brennan, had protested against the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which is frequently used to clamp down on criticism of Israel.

Brennan was accused of antisemitism after protesting with a placard that called Israel an apartheid state.

Tens of thousands of Corbyn supporters have shown they still want to stand up to the smears.

Some 15,000 people had donated more than £280,000 to a legal fund for Corbyn as Socialist Worker went to press.

Yet ending the right's attacks means taking them on politically—not just legally or bureaucratically.

Leading left wing figures in Labour had hoped that a leaked report apparently exposing right wing attempts to sabotage Corbyn would vindicate the left.

Instead, Starmer kicked the report into the long grass. And now some of those named in the report are suing the party for breaches of confidentiality.

Throughout Corbyn's leadership, the left refused to take on the accusations with a defence of the right to call Israel a racist state. They hoped that backing down would stop the attacks.

Now they hope they can win by fighting inside the machinery of a party geared towards humiliating, beating down or expelling them.

## 'Equality' report could be next weapon for Starmer

**A REPORT** by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) into Labour's handling of antisemitism accusations is expected to be published very shortly.

It's the result of complaints against the party by organisations that consider opposition to the Israeli state to be antisemitic.

And it "may have regard" to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and its linked examples.

This definition has been used to brand pro-Palestine campaigning, and the description of Israel as a racist state, as antisemitic.

The EHRC isn't tasked

with deciding whether Labour is institutionally antisemitic.

The report will look into whether Labour or those acting on behalf of the party have committed unlawful acts. It will also ask if they responded to complaints in a lawful, efficient and effective manner."

### Disciplinary

And it will see whether Labour's rules and disciplinary processes were adequate to deal with complaints.

If the report says that Labour mishandled antisemitism accusations, it will be used as evidence that Corbyn's left wing politics made the party antisemitic.

# A weekend of protests— from treetops to river rigs

by SARAH BATES

**A WEEKEND** of action against climate catastrophe saw activists clamber up trees, board drilling rigs and occupy roads in London and the surrounding area.

Three Extinction Rebellion (XR) members locked themselves to a drilling rig on the River Thames to protest against the construction of the Silvertown Tunnel last Saturday.

Construction is soon to begin on the new project, which is set to create yet another road link between the east London boroughs of Greenwich and Newham.

Rebels locked themselves to the rig and the keys were delivered to London mayor Sadiq Khan, along with a letter asking him to address the protesters.

Three people remained on the rig for 11 hours and were then arrested on suspicion of aggravated trespass.

Activists hung a banner declaring "No toxic tunnel" to draw attention to the way the new road route will cause environmental destruction and lead to an increase in air pollution.

An XR spokesperson said, "We are immensely proud of our brave activists who are standing up for the respiratory health of local residents and the wellbeing of future generations."

"The man with the power to stop this is Sadiq Khan. He has refused to listen to any of our legal means of appeal."

Activists also staged a procession through Greenwich to commemorate the "26 lives that are lost due to air pollution everyday in London."

Local residents have fought for years against the tunnel, arguing that creating a new route for walkers and cyclists would be of more use to the community.

## Pollution

Activists opposing the construction of the HS2 railway were engaged in stand-offs with cops and eviction firms over the weekend.

Environmental activists suspended themselves from ropes attached to trees in an attempt to protect a 600-year old tree from being felled.

The action at Denham County Park, Buckinghamshire, was the latest protest in the long-running battle that has seen activists living high up in trees for weeks at a time.

But they report that the National Eviction Team, a private firm that specialises in evicting protest sites, cut ropes holding activists and at least two plunged into shallow water below.

One protester was taken to hospital.

"This is outrageous, they've just cut the line so my friend has fallen



**EXTINCTION** Rebellion activists in London locked themselves to a drilling rig in the Thames River last weekend in a bid to disrupt construction of the Silvertown Tunnel (top) To the west of London, protesters against the HS2 railway battled to protect their tree-top protest camps from being dislodged by a firm of 'eviction specialists' (left)

PICTURES: EXTINCTION REBELLION UK AND TALIA WOODIN

into the river," said Larch from the treetops.

"We've been telling them for hours that they cannot touch the lines or they'll fall and now they've cut it and someone has fallen.

"Everyone present—Metropolitan police, Thames Valley police, the ambulance service, the fire service, the HS2 workers—all of them knew," he said.

Activists are continuing their battle to halt the project, which is set to cost at least £100 billion and will gravely damage the environment.

For information on where protection camps are based visit [hs2rebellion.earth/camp-locations/](http://hs2rebellion.earth/camp-locations/)

## On other pages...

The fight for decent pay for NHS workers >>Page 20

## ANTI-RACISM

### Stop and search and Section 60 come under fire

HUNDREDS OF people marched in south London last Saturday to demand an end to police stop and search powers.

The protest, organised by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) south London, assembled on Windrush Square in Brixton.

It marched through the streets, chanting, "Stop Section 60," as passers-by applauded and joined it.

Suhella, a SUTR supporter, said, "We've seen tens of thousands of young black men being stopped and searched during the pandemic and 80 percent of those cases have come with no further action

"The police need to be held accountable for these actions."

On the same day, anti-racists rallied in support of Labour MP Dawn Butler who was forced to close her west London constituency office because of racist abuse.

Butler gave a defiant speech, saying, "I'm optimistic because there are whole different generations fighting together.

"One time, in the 1960s and 70s, there was just one group of people, now there's everybody.

"And that's why we're going to win this."

Anti-racists led chants of, "Black Lives Matter," and, "No Justice, no peace."

"We will continue to fight," Butler said.

"This is a battle and this is a battle for our lives."

The following day supporters of SUTR in Tower Hamlets, east London, held a rally for Rayan Crawford.

The Tories deported Rayan, a local man and father of two, on a charter flight to Jamaica in February.

Meanwhile, SUTR was preparing for an online rally on "Opposing Racism Today" on Thursday this week. Speakers were set to include civil rights leader Reverend Al Sharpton and Labour MP Diane Abbott.

## GRENFELL

### 'Race and class' at the heart of disaster

**THE FAMILIES** of those who died in the Grenfell fire and campaigners are calling for a separate investigation into the role of both race and class in their deaths.

The Grenfell Next of Kin group has submitted a statement to the inquiry chair, Sir Martin Moore-Bick.

This document asks for a module in the inquiry that examines if the cost cutting that caused the deaths of 72 people would have been carried out if the inhabitants of the

tower had been white and rich.

The statement says, "Systemic racism goes deep to the heart of the problem that caused the catastrophe.

Questions around race and social class is at the heart of this truth-seeking and we would be grateful if you can revisit it and add it as an extra module."

Justice activist Moyra Samuel told Socialist Worker, "There is a culture of institutional indifference to racism in this borough.

We also need to look at how class affected what happened and to ask, if Grenfell was in affluent Chelsea would this have happened?"

Moyra also said that "just the admission that race and class played a part in the deaths would be a step forward".

This latest demand is also a grim reminder of how long activists have had to fight to get the courts to even consider that racism and class had a part to play in this tragedy.

# Global coronavirus spread is a warning of reckless reopening

by SARAH BATES

**CORONAVIRUS CONTINUES to sweep across the globe, with underfunded and understaffed health services struggling to provide care.**

President Donald Trump's US remains the most appalling example of the toll of ruling class failure. Officially nearly 150,000 people have died from the disease and there are more than 4.1 million cases across the country.

At the same time unemployment is soaring.

Yet the government hasn't yet agreed on a new unemployment benefit to help people without jobs survive.

Soaring infection rates in states such as California are leaving many people unable to get a test.

In the state, some 12,800 new cases were confirmed in a 24-hour period last week, and the healthcare system is struggling to cope.

"It breaks my heart when we have to say no, we can't test you," said Dr Grace Neuman, who runs a hospital testing programme in Los Angeles.

The health centre serves around 25,000 patients, yet is now only able to use 25 test kits every day. The shortages come because laboratories are unable to keep up with demand.

## Excludes

And the way in which testing is run often excludes people who need healthcare access the most.

People without cars aren't able to use the drive-through testing sites. And people without immigration documents will avoid services where they have to give personal information.

"I feel like Covid-19 is like the Grim Reaper," said Neuman.

Such large numbers of infections are swamping the contact tracers desperately trying to speak to those who have tested positive.

## Tens of thousands are evacuated in Vietnam

EVEN IN Vietnam, which has largely avoided the virus, there are renewed fears of the Covid-19 disease spreading.

Some 80,000 domestic tourists are being evacuated from the central city of Da Nang.

It comes after three residents tested positive for coronavirus.

The Southeast Asian country

Experts in South Africa warned that the death toll there could be "far higher" than the official figures show.

The South African Medical Research Council said excess deaths were 17,000 higher than previous years.

Some of these will be cases of undiagnosed Covid-19, but others are dying of other ailments as they steer clear of hospitals.

The nation currently has the fifth highest number of Covid-19 cases in the world, with more than 400,000 infections, and the number of cases rising by more than 10,000 a day.

More than 1.3 million cases have been recorded in India.

A study has revealed that far higher numbers than expected—nearly one in four people—in the capital New Delhi had contracted Covid-19.

The government survey said 23 percent of the 21,387 tested had Covid-19 antibodies.

Previous figures put the rate of infection less than one percent of the city population.

## Recorded

Across the country almost 100,000 new confirmed cases of the virus have been recorded in just two days.

In Australia, authorities are desperately trying to combat a deadly second wave that is sweeping the nation, in particular the state of Victoria.

Since national lockdown restrictions eased in May, cases have increased, and on 23 July, 398 new cases were recorded.

Similarly to Britain, hundreds of care home residents and their carers have been left unprotected to battle the disease.

## On other pages...

Thrown on the scrapheap by the Tories >>Pages 10&11

is back on high alert after it confirmed last weekend its first community infections since April.

Vietnam has imposed strict quarantine measures.

And it has carried out an aggressive and widespread testing programme during the pandemic.

Vietnam has no recorded deaths from the virus.



THOUSANDS OF cars join a queue for drive-through testing in the US

## MEXICO AND BRAZIL

# Workers suffer as presidents put profit ahead of jobs and safety

WORKERS DOING essential work in Mexico are facing similar problems to those in the US and are struggling to get their hands on testing kits.

"The WHO has said 'test, test, test—but not even healthcare workers have access to tests," said Rafael Soto, nurse and spokesperson for medical workers protesting for health improvements.

"Many co-workers have died without ever being tested."

The Johns Hopkins University reports that just three tests are performed for every 100,000 people.

And the figures show the disease is spreading rapidly—66 percent of tests return positive results.

Mexico's president, Andres

Manuel Lopez Obrador, elected as a radical alternative to neoliberalism, is using the pandemic as an opportunity to push through severe austerity measures.

And in Brazil, health workers continue to battle the disease.

The country announced 67,860 new cases in just one day last week and over 85,000 people are confirmed to have died because of coronavirus.

President Jair Bolsonaro is another world leader who shunned a strict lockdown and instead joined local protests against the measures.

He has refused to enter into a strict lockdown, and instead opened up the economy while rates of Covid-19 cases were rising.



Bolsonaro isn't bothered



## Work from home can alienate

MANY ANALYSTS are predicting that there is going to be a big rise in home working as a result of coronavirus.

I expect that quite a lot of workers may welcome this.

They save money on travel, and perhaps on food, and don't have the boss physically looking over their shoulder.

I'm not so sure it's a good thing.

At home, you will be paying for your own heat, light, accommodation and internet.

Not many firms are going to compensate you for that.

More fundamentally, there is a pressure to self-police your work and to strip away the very limited rights that some workers have.

And there are other limitations to working from home. Firstly it will be much harder to create collective opposition to whatever managers seek to do.

Work, even in a large company, could be just you and your immediate team and the boss on a Zoom call.

This could be a recipe for greater alienation from the social aspects of the work process and a way to step up unpaid work from employees.

It's a big challenge to trade unions to overcome this fragmentation and individualisation.

Are there good examples of dealing with this?

And what do other socialists think about home working?

**Hannah Reynolds,**  
West London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## 'Kickstart' programme will give bosses opportunity to exploit

MEASURES ANNOUNCED in Rishi Sunak's mini-budget supposedly to help workers have been welcomed by the TUC.

The "Kickstart" programme aimed at young unemployed people is a huge bonus for employers who will have a ready supply of free labour on tap.

The benefit for workers is far less clear—despite claims to the contrary on the part of the chancellor.

It cannot be guaranteed that jobs provided by the scheme will not just be displacing jobs that would have been available anyway were the scheme not in place.

After all, what employer wouldn't want the state to pay as

much of their wage bill as possible? While the scheme may have some rules to limit this, there will still be plenty of scope for bosses to gain.

Jobs filled by the scheme where lower wage rates apply due to the system of age bands will undermine the higher minimum wage rate that applies to the majority of the workforce.

Currently, 18 to 20 year olds get £2.72 less per hour than a worker aged 25 or over.

If reasonable assumptions about mandatory participation are correct the new scheme will be the latest example of "workfare"—work for your benefits schemes.

Under 25s on Universal Credit will be told to take any job in the

scheme or face losing their benefits. As the DWP seeks to crank back up its punitive system of benefit sanctions this raises the real prospect of enforced labour for hundreds of thousands of young people.

Something has to be done about the huge growth in unemployment but the TUC is wrong to give Kickstart a warm welcome.

We need one minimum wage for all, an end to workfare schemes and punitive sanctions, and a shorter working week with no loss of pay to share out what work there is.

We don't need yet another dead end youth employment scam.

**Mark Dunk**  
South London

## Billionaire's obscene wealth continues to grow

JEFF BEZOS recently increased his wealth by \$10 billion dollars in a single day. He has done this while one in five workers furloughed in Britain are facing redundancy and a world recession looms.

Working class people have suffered because of Covid-19, but Bezos has managed to turn an unimaginable profit.

It would take 21,000 years to earn \$1 billion on an average wage.

Meanwhile some Amazon workers have lost their lives after being forced to work in unsafe conditions and have lost their jobs for threatening strikes.

One man has more wealth than several countries, but nurses who have saved people's lives by risking their own have been refused a pay rise.

It is clear that we need system change more than ever.

**Isobel Ringrose**  
York

## Why are we still ignored after Grenfell?

I RECENTLY purchased a flat with a mortgage. It looked to be pretty perfect for mine and my husband's needs.

We have been doing up the flat to our liking, and have almost finished the work.

Recently I discovered that the cladding on our block of flat means that it isn't safe to live in.

The housing association, Clarion, is now making out that this isn't an issue despite a report being written proving how dangerous the cladding is.



I've been furloughed from my job at Waitrose and my husband who is legally blind is ill.

I feel like I have no energy to fight this. I'm just so angry. This

feels like a kick in the face. I've tried to contact my local MP and the council but have heard nothing back.

After Grenfell, you'd think the council would care more about this issue. But I really haven't felt like my case has been supported at all.

I am so angry at the government for doing nothing to put pressure on companies when it comes to cladding. The whole thing feels like a nightmare.

**Elizabeth Woolley**  
North London

Just a thought...

## Remember women's Comintern

THANKS FOR a fascinating article on the 100th anniversary of the Comintern (Socialist Worker, 15 July).

It is worth noting that the Communist Women's International was also meeting in Moscow at the same time.

The aim of the Women's Comintern was to take socialist ideas out to working class women.

It was also to organise support for International Women's Day as a key part of the Comintern's project of building international socialism.

**Judy Cox**  
East London

## Now Labour has given in

LABOUR HAS apologised over its criticism of "whistleblowers" who spoke to the Panorama a TV programme.

There's one main problem with this apology and subsequent payout.

If you apologise for something that means that what the "whistleblowers" said was clearly true.

This apology and payout is truly the end of the left project to transform the Labour Party from the austerity and war party it had become to a vehicle for social change.

All socialists who remain in Labour are doing is maintaining the fallacy that Labour can change. They're helping con the electorate that there is a left face to Labour.

**Phil Allsopp**  
Abergavenny, South Wales

## Culture for all needs funding

DESPITE THE treasury putting £1.7 billion into the arts, culture in Britain is in trouble.

Thousands of people will lose their jobs and galleries, theatres and music venues will be shut if more money isn't given.

The worry is that without funding the arts will, even more so, be for only the privileged few.

We must say that culture should be for all.

**Jane Barnett**  
Birmingham

# THROWN ON THE SCRAP HEAP BY THE TORIES

Workers facing poverty, unemployment and insecurity told **Sadie Robinson** why they feel they have been completely abandoned by their bosses and the government.

**T**HE TORIES are trashing the lives of millions of people by refusing to support them through the coronavirus crisis.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak says workers can be furloughed to protect their jobs. He claims self-employed workers can access grants. And the Tories say anyone thrown out of work can get by on benefits.

The reality is that millions have either little or no support. People are suffering poverty, depression and stress, and they have no idea when it will get better.

Nicky Warnock was offered a job with a construction training firm in February. Her start date was delayed as she was caring for her sister, then put back again due to lockdown.

Now bosses have withdrawn the job. "It's had a huge effect on my mental health," Nicky told Socialist Worker. "I've just taken a nosedive."

"I just feel on the edge of tears a lot of the time."

Nicky described how she has had "a really tough few months". She was made redundant last October. Her brother-in-law died suddenly last May, and her sister passed away in March.

"Getting offered a job was a real boost," she said. "It was the one little positive glimpse of light."

"Now trying to get the energy to resurrect the job search is daunting. Every day is just me in the house, on my own in front of the computer job searching and not hearing anything back."

Laura Gonzalez was working as a tour guide in Brighton before the virus hit. Now she's working 18 hours a week in Morrisons supermarket on a temporary



MILLIONS ARE being forgotten (above) and the economy slows down (left) while the Tories such as chancellor Rishi Sunak (right) look after the bosses

**A**S GOVERNMENT rhetoric focuses on support for young people, older workers who have lost their income fear not being able to get work again. But young people face an uncertain future too.

contract that could end next month. Laura told Socialist Worker that the feeling of being left behind has had "a significant impact on my mental health".

"There is nothing really positive in my life," she said.

"By the end of August I'm going to be competing with the millions who are now unemployed."

"I'm watching my savings disappear. Everything's out of my control."

Susan Lee was made redundant from her admin job two days before the government announced its furlough scheme.

She said her MP then wrote to the firm, but bosses "absolutely refused" to put her on furlough.

"It's absolutely soul destroying. I don't like being at home all day," she said.

She added that benefit rules mean her future is even more precarious. "Come September, I will have been on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for six months, so then I will get nothing at all," she said. "I will just be reliant on my husband."

Nicky said her JSA "runs out on 4 August". "As far as I know I'm not entitled to anything as my husband is working," she said. "But we've still got a mortgage and all the other bills to pay."

Anna, a self-employed potter, lost teaching work during the lockdown. She's now on Universal Credit—and says she's left with £8 a month after rent to pay bills and feed herself and three children.

"You can't live for a day off £8, let alone a month," she told Socialist Worker. "I'm 54 years old. I've worked

hard and paid tax all my life—and for this? It's shit."

The Tories claim self-employed people can claim grants and loans.

But Anna said she is ineligible for them, as she doesn't have business premises and the government isn't taking the 2019-20 tax year into account.

So she is using credit cards, building up "hideous levels of debt". And she has had to rely on her family to buy her and her children food.

She says, "We're growing some veg now to feed ourselves. I walk around the house looking at things and thinking, 'Do I really need that? I could get £10 for it on eBay.'

and migrant workers in these industries. What jobs are they going to find?"

There is, rightly, fury at how the government has operated throughout the crisis.

"There will be millions who have fallen through the net," said Anna. "We've been completely forgotten."

"When questions are put to ministers, it's like they're just sticking their fingers in their ears. They never answer any questions."

"He clearly has the money, but we aren't a priority. To be told I can't get anything, that the taxes I paid for 15 years mean nothing, is a kick in the teeth."

Nathan added that many young people have worked in industries that are now in pieces. "All my work experience is in food and beverage, and hospitality," he said. "All of those jobs have been eviscerated."

Laura accused Sunak of "destroying people's lives". "People have said they feel suicidal, they're becoming depressed," she said. Peta, a lecturer at



## What to do?

**S**OME OF those abandoned by the government are fighting back. They have set up a group called Excluded UK on Facebook, to give support and campaign for change.

Laura said, "We need as many people as possible to spread the word."

"A lot of people feel like giving up, but I'm not giving up."

"We need to continue putting pressure on the government to say you can't ignore us. There's nothing else to do other than keep shouting about it."

Nicky explained why it's important to get organised. "You're stronger together," she said. "As a group you have more clout, and can campaign."

UCU union member Peta added that, in workplaces where unions are organised, there needs to be much more of a fightback.

"There are loads of universities in the same situation as us," she said. "We knew this was coming for months—we should have been prepared."

"Our general secretary says we can't have ballots of strikes. But we've seen that others can, such as council workers in Tower Hamlets."

"We're allowing our employers to pick us off one at a time."

"The union needs a national response."

For more information and to be involved go to [excludeduk.org](http://excludeduk.org)

already in desperate situations. Yet a more horrific situation is looming.

The government will begin winding down its furlough scheme, currently supporting over nine million jobs, from next month. By October it will be gone.

Every day more firms announce redundancies. Those self-employed who have lost work and who can't claim any support will eventually run out of cash. And people claiming JSA will be told they can no longer receive it.

"We've probably got a few weeks, and then we'll start running out of money," said Nicky.

"The government should be doing more to support people, such as extend JSA."

"People are working hard to find new jobs, but the jobs aren't there. I know someone who applied for an admin role at a local golf course, and there were 200 applications."

Susan said we need a better system. "The government should have put everybody on a payroll on £1,200 a month," she said. "They could have provided a living wage that we could all have lived on and everyone would get the same."

"I'm 55 and I've worked since I was 17. I just wish the government would go back and think about people with absolutely nothing."

But the Tories won't budge without a fight. And as Boris Johnson piles the pressure on people to return to work, some feel a growing sense of being left behind.

"I'm finding it harder to cope now," said Nicky. "It feels like everyone else is getting back to normal, but normal for me is this really horrible world."

"You're forgotten, really"



Liverpool university, was told her temporary contract would not be renewed this month. She has worked at the university for 23 years.

"It's not been good for my mental health," she told Socialist Worker.

"I've had three months of thinking, this job is going to finish and I might never get another job in higher education again."

"It's like your whole sense of identity is going."

**P**ETA SAID that studying for years involves a lot of "sacrifices" and the huge rewards that people are told will result are a myth.

"You aren't earning much doing a PhD," she said. "But you're told that at the end of it, after some temporary jobs, you'll have a permanent one. But I've had eight different contracts in the last four years."

"They may as well just issue us all with Deliveroo uniforms."

Laura is also angry that workers who were told they are crucial and valued have been put at risk.

"During lockdown, we were told to stay home," she said. "But I had no choice but to go out and find work."

"I had to expose myself to the virus and work for the minimum wage as a 'key worker'."

Nathan agreed that the rhetoric from the top doesn't match the reality. "Employers say you're valued and an essential worker," he said.

"At Jarrold we were told we are all 'part of the family' and all that crap. But you're not. You're just an employee being exploited." Too many people are

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown.

Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

# Socialist Workers Party online meetings



KATHLEEN CLEAVER and Black Panther co-founder Bobby Seale (right) at a Free Huey rally in Oakland, California, in 1968

## How the Black Panthers fought the state

### BIRMINGHAM

Wed 5 Aug,  
7pm  
281-634-5938

### COVENTRY

Wed 5 Aug  
7.30pm  
823-945-1917

### LONDON : NEWHAM

Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
992-204-9372



The Socialist Workers Party is holding online meetings during the coronavirus crisis. This is to ensure that there can still be collective local discussion, organising and actions.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and at the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page [facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty](https://facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty) for news of national online meetings and other updates.

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } ONLINE MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### BLACK COUNTRY

**The bloody history of the British Empire**  
Wed 5 Aug, 8pm  
352-891-2411

### BRADFORD

**By any means necessary — the revolutionary legacy of Malcolm X**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
7pm  
885 9187 7552

### BRIGHTON AND HOVE

**Starmer, Palestine and Labour's shift to the right**  
Thu 6 Aug, 6.30pm  
818-1857-1448

### BURNLEY AND PENDLE

**The revolutionary ideas of Angela Davis**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
446-409-5118

### CAMBRIDGE

**Do we need violence to bring about social change?**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
7.30pm  
681-800-4408

### CARDIFF

**The revolutionary ideas of Angela Davis**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7:30pm  
630-181-4857

### CHELMSFORD AND SOUTHBEND

**Is science neutral?**  
Wed 5 August,  
7pm  
836-7833-8366

### CHESTERFIELD

**Socialists, non-violence and civil disobedience**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
6.30pm  
829-532-8731

### DUNDEE, ABERDEEN AND PERTH

**Coronavirus, imperialism and the Global South**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
396-573-1805

### EDINBURGH

**Covid-19, the fight in the workplace — how we resist Tory attacks**  
Wed 5 Aug, 7.30pm  
431-459-112

### GLASGOW

**Covid, capitalism and economic crisis**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
6.30pm  
848-1501-3898

### HARLOW

**Why socialists oppose all borders**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
7.30pm  
832-8746-7480

### HUDDERSFIELD

**Fake news and alternative facts**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
6:30pm  
290-168-1804

### LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

**All the statues should fall — confronting the legacy of slavery and empire**  
Thu 6 Aug, 6.30pm  
992-204-9372

### LEEDS

**Capitalism and war — 75 years after Hiroshima**  
Thu 6 Aug, 7.15pm  
935-5290-8076

### LIVERPOOL

**A socialist history of Liverpool**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7pm 493-925-5919

### LONDON : HACKNEY

**The revolutionary ideas of Angela Davis**  
Thu 6 Aug, 7.30pm  
798-534-2585

### LONDON : HARINGEY

**Trump, China and imperialism**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
459-388-1576

### LONDON : ISLINGTON

**Where does racism come from?**  
Thu 6 Aug, 7.30pm  
874-012-7970

### LONDON : SOUTH

**Slavery, resistance and the Haitian revolution**  
Wed 5 Aug, 7pm  
497-196-1801

### LONDON : SOUTH EAST

**All the statues should fall — confronting the legacy of slavery and empire**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
529-913-6390

### LONDON : TOWER HAMLETS

**Covid, capitalism and economic crisis**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
818-391-0420

### LONDON : WALTHAM FOREST

**Is science neutral?**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
543-023-057

### LONDON : WEST AND NORTH WEST

**A rebel's guide to Engels**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
6pm  
731-479-3555

### MANCHESTER

**How US communists fought racism in the 1930s**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.15pm  
883-7993-1253

### NORWICH

**Covid, capitalism and economic crisis**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
906-652-5299

### NOTTINGHAM AND DERBY

**The legacy of the Haitian revolution**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7pm  
354-874-4790

### OXFORD

**Capitalism, diet and the politics of food**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
7.15pm  
893 9944 2417

### PORTSMOUTH

**Starmer, Palestine and Labour's shift to the right**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
488-934-2809

### SHREFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE

**Fake news and alternative facts — who controls the media?**  
Thu 6 Aug,  
7pm  
529-174-9278

### SOUTHAMPTON

**Covid, capitalism and economic crisis**  
Wed 5 Aug, 7.30pm  
381-513-5080

### SWANSEA

**How Trump is failing the US**  
Wed 5 Aug,  
7.30pm  
248-448-3170

### YORK AND SCARBOROUGH

**What is a revolution and why do we need one?**  
Wed 5 Aug, 7.30pm  
827-489-7492

## BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



**The Labour Party—  
A Marxist History**  
by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein  
and Charlie Kimber, £14.99



**A Rebel's Guide to Engels**  
by Camilla Royle  
£4



**Hegel and Revolution**  
by Terry Sullivan and  
Donny Gluckstein, £7



**Transgender Resistance**  
by Laura Miles  
£10

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### CONTACT THE SWP

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# Gaslighter—a furious return for country-pop legends

The Chicks' first album in 14 years makes the personal political—and is a welcome comeback for a band not afraid to speak its mind, says **Anna Blake**

**THE CHICKS** have ditched the “Dixie.” The country-pop trio are back with a shortened name—the D word being shorthand for the former Confederate states—and their first album in 14 years.

Increasingly uncomfortable with their name, they say the racist rhetoric rife in Trump’s US prompted them to finally “meet the moment” presented by Black Lives Matter.

When they emerged onto the country scene in the late 90s, the Chicks impressed with their powerful song writing and talented instrumentalism. They became one of the US’s favourite all-female bands and enjoyed international success.

Yet in 2003, they were dropped by the country music establishment and scores of right wing fans after they criticised then US president George Bush and his war in Iraq.

Lead singer Natalie Maines told a London crowd that the band “do not want this war, this violence, and we’re ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas.” They were blacklisted from country radio stations and received death threats for their stand.

They attempted to push back but—aside from their 2006 album *Taking the Long Way* and collaborations with megastars Beyoncé and Taylor Swift—have taken a long break since.

*Gaslighter* is more pop than previous albums, largely influenced by co-producer Jack Antonoff, who worked on Swift’s 2019 release *Lover*.

The connection with Swift can be easily drawn politically too. Maines recently described how “very proud” she is of Swift’s increasingly outspoken political views.

The opening title track sets the tone for the rest of the album. Much of it documents the recent breakdown



THE CHICKS

**Tell the ol’ boys in the white bread lobby  
What they can and can’t do with their bodies  
Temperatures are rising, cities are sinkin’  
Lies are truth and truth is fiction  
Everybody’s talkin’  
Who’s gonna listen?**

From *March, March*, by The Chicks

of Maines’s marriage. It is so personal that her ex-husband argued in the court that it negated their privacy settlement.

*Sleep at Night*, *Texas Man* and the closing track *Set Me Free* are all pure country-pop anger and heartbreak. *Juliana Calm Down* might make you wince with the suggestion that any woman should “calm down”. It’s not exactly a message of liberation.

It—and *For Her*—represent the idea that women can take their power not from collective action, but on how confidently they take on their personal battles.

And, of course, the “Chicks” bit of the name remains.

But the Chicks are also using the term “gaslighter” as a wider political putdown. In an Instagram video, Maines drew parallels between Donald Trump’s deadly coronavirus response to that of a deceitful partner convincing you that you are imagining things.

There is one explicit protest song—*March, March*. Combining an electronic fiddle and banjo, it addresses a range of social and political issues including the youth climate strike, gun violence and public sector pay.

The video pays tribute to movements for justice that have swept the US and the globe.

It is also one of the finest showcases of the instrumentalism from Maines’s co-members Martie Maguire and Emily Strayer that is a little lacking in this new release.

Some may suggest that the recent name change is virtue signalling. But The Chicks have got form for sometimes upsetting the establishment.

This album is largely a personal, cathartic lyrical effort from Maines yet still tinged with political anger.

*Gaslighter* is out now

## FILM

### AMERICAN HISTORY X

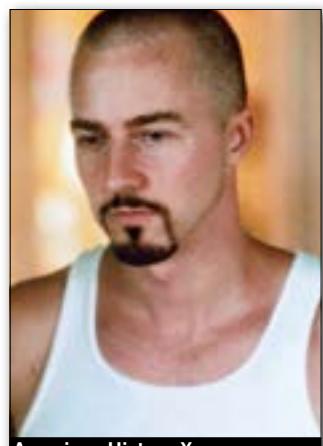
On Netflix from 1 August

THIS LANDMARK film about a reformed neo-Nazi is coming to Netflix.

Derek Vineyard is paroled after serving three years in prison for brutally killing two black men who tried to break into his truck.

Before entering prison he was a skinhead and the leader of a violent white supremacist gang.

Reformed and fresh out of prison, Derek severs contact with the gang and



American History X

becomes determined to keep his brother Danny from going down the same path as he did.

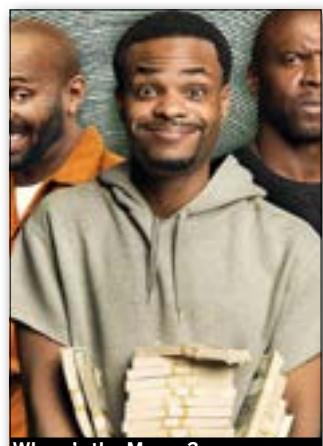
## FILM

### WHERE'S THE MONEY?

On Netflix from 1 August

DEL GOODLOW has always lived in the Los Angeles hood and works at a gym his father started.

His father’s gym was meant to keep kids off the



Where's the Money?

streets from doing drugs and joining gangs.

But now, his father is in jail and the gym is being driven into debt.

Del’s father calls him and tells about \$1 million hidden in the basement of a flop house. Del goes to the flop house and finds that it has been turned into a fraternity.

To get the money he has to infiltrate the fraternity of rich white students.

## FILM

### BREAKING THE BANK

On Netflix from 1 August

KELSEY Grammer—probably best known as Frasier, or as Sideshow Bob in *The Simpsons*—plays a posh English buffoon in this twee comedy about bankers.

Charles Bunbury is the chair of “family” bank Tuftons, which is actually owned by his wife Penelope, played by Tamsin Greig. Bunbury hasn’t

a clue what he’s doing and after a catastrophic investment brings Tufton’s tumbling down.

Vultures start circling and Bunbury loses Penelope and the bank to a big-shot US investor.

With the help of a homeless man he sets out to redeem himself and get them both back.

Despite the cast, there aren’t really that many laughs here. It’s a laboured plot with laboured jokes. That’s partly because it all just



Kelsey Grammer as banker Charles Bunbury

feels a bit pedestrian and old fashioned. Which is a problem given that the film—first released in 2014—is meant to be topical.

So we’re meant to laugh at the posh oaf’s incompetence and his deserving downfall.

But we’re also meant to root for him and his plucky little bank against the big bad Americans.

It was quite an ask for audiences to warm to a reckless toff. It’s even more tin eared now.

**B**RITAIN was ripe for radical change in 1920. Around the world millions rightly blamed their leaders' lies for the slaughter of the First World War. For the first time all adult men and many women had the vote. Passive resentment had turned to active militancy.

In 1919 Britain saw mutinies among troops demanding to be demobbed, and an unprecedented strike wave.

Bosses' attacks on pay and conditions met stiff resistance. This was the background to the launch of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

The new organisation's paper reported that in one week, "British soldiers were ambushed in Ireland, warehouses were fired in Liverpool, the Houses of Parliament were closed to the public, and barricades were put up in Downing Street."

Communist Parties are now associated with the worst in top down, dogmatic organisations, which has turned generations of the left against political parties.

But then both their aims and structure were very different. They were able to learn and generalise from their new members and new experiences round the world.

Many new radicals were repulsed by the Labour representatives in parliament, who had for the most part supported the war and the empire.

Scottish militant Tom Bell wrote that the most charitable thing to say about Labour's attempts to support workers in parliament "is that it is slow, so slow it breaks men's hearts".

**T**HE CPGB was a revolutionary organisation committed to democratic rule by workers' councils, not the sham of parliament. It was for a new type of party that focused on struggle from below.

Unfortunately there was still a lot of truth in Frederick Engels' complaint from the 1890s that Britain's small revolutionary groups thought, "Marxist theory is to be forced down the throats of the workers at once and without development as articles of faith."

Indeed, many of their members avoided everyday bread and butter issues as irrelevant to the wider struggle for revolution.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 pointed to a new politics that saw that to fight the bosses it was also necessary to take up broader issues—to challenge racism and empire, to increase rights for women.

Members of the small revolutionary groups came to see both the need to work with wider



The Communist Party on a May Day parade in 1936

# A PARTY THAT BEGAN AS RADICAL

The Communist Party of Great Britain was founded 100 years ago to fight for revolutionary change. Ken Olende looks at its roots and the debates that took place as it was formed



**Sylvia Pankhurst**  
campaigns and with Labour, whose membership might be passive, but included many of the most active militants.

The Marxist British Socialist Party (BSP) affiliated in 1916, not because it abandoned support for revolutionary change, but because Labour "is a semi-conscious recognition of the conflict of interests between the proletariat and the master class".

At the time it was still possible to affiliate to Labour as an

**Many new radicals were repulsed by the Labour MPs in parliament**

independent organisation. This potentially allowed a communist party more flexibility than in most other countries, which would not allow membership of any other political party.

Negotiations to found the CPGB began in earnest in 1919, but as they advanced, the tide of revolution was receding.

Less than a year after the party's launch in the summer of 1920, the wave of militancy was decisively ended on Black Friday, 15 April 1921, when

trade union leaders reneged on a promise to strike in support of miners faced with a lockout.

That meant that the movement was in retreat and militants had to learn to work with people who didn't see revolution as possible or even desirable.

This was why the Russian leader Lenin wrote Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder.

He respected the revolutionary anger that made militants reject parliament, saying, "This temper is highly gratifying and valuable... in its absence, it would be hopeless to expect the victory of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, or in any other country for that matter."

But he also said that they were wrong.

**T**HE pamphlet's title is not a put down of childish organisations, but presents their ultra-leftism as a childhood disease because of the inexperience of the parties.

Its focus was on much larger parties in Italy and Germany, but Lenin talks about two of Britain's best and most prominent left wingers Sylvia Pankhurst and Willie Gallacher.

Representation in parliament had been a major issue. Pankhurst's radical suffragette movement renamed itself the Workers' Suffrage Federation in early 1917.

Its aim was to "secure human suffrage, namely, a vote, for every woman and man of full age, and to win social and economic freedom for the people".

But by the 1918 general election, the first where all men and many women could vote, she wrote, "We hope nothing from this election, save that it may serve to spur the workers on to abolish Parliament."

Lenin disagreed, saying that before becoming revolutionary Britain's workers must experience a Labour government, "an experience which was necessary in Russia and Germany so as to secure the mass transition of the workers to communism".

To this end the CPGB "should participate in parliamentary action". It should work in Labour as long it kept "complete freedom of agitation, propaganda and political activity".

They were the best known British supporters of the revolution, neither Maclean nor Pankhurst accepted Lenin's arguments—though Gallacher came round and became a leading member.

They wrongly thought that the united front weakened the party's revolutionary potential.

Still, for a brief time most of the best militants came together in an organisation that looked

## READ MORE

- **A history of Communism in Britain** by Brian Pearce and Michael Woodhouse £7.99
- **The Early Years of the CPGB** by Joseph Redman—a pseudonym of Brian Pearce. Available at [bit.ly/PearceCPGB](http://bit.ly/PearceCPGB)
- **Communist Politics in Britain: the CPGB from its Origins to the Second World War** by Hugo Dewar, £7.99
- Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



fighting for hegemony of ideas in the radical movement.

The CPGB was founded on 31 July 1920 at a Unity Convention with 160 delegates at the Cannon Street Hotel in London.

**T**HE MOST heated discussions were on whether to engage in elections and whether to try to affiliate to Labour. Despite opposition from young activists, the conference agreed to do both.

Labour was to repeatedly reject the affiliation attempt.

Several leading radicals missed the conference as they were travelling to Russia to the Second Congress of the Comintern.

These included John Maclean, Dick Beach, and Willie Gallacher, JT Murphy, David Ramsay, Jack Tanner, Sylvia Pankhurst and Walton Newbold.

Within a month the party was involved in the setting up of more than 350 Councils of Action around Britain.

The call had originally gone out from Labour leaders—hoping to head off radical change. It showed the potential for activists from different backgrounds to work together.

The paper warned against "attempts by the trade union and Labour leaders to frustrate the wishes of the rank and file".

Unfortunately, by this point the movement was already in retreat.

**T**HE establishment feared the new party from the start. After Black Friday in 1921, more than 70 Communists were arrested for selling papers or holding street meetings and many were imprisoned.

Communist Party members taking part in an election campaign in 1928 (top). A Communist Party rally in the 1950s (above)

to educate and organise the best militants in all fields.

But the radical, flexible edge was blunted by Stalinist politics from the late 1920s and never returned.

Already by the General Strike of 1926 the independence the Comintern had called for was compromised. The CPGB now called for "All Power to the General Council" of the TUC, the very bureaucrats who were holding militancy back.

They wrongly thought that the CPGB should remind us that there is a long revolutionary tradition in Britain that fights for an alternative to Labour's failures.

But the foundation of the CPGB should remind us that there is a long revolutionary tradition in Britain that fights for an alternative to Labour's failures.

It's pitifully inadequate. As legal campaign group Plan B pointed out, it's far less than the money spent on similar projects in other European countries.

More to the point, it doesn't come close to tackling the causes of climate catastrophe, let alone mitigating even its worst effects.

Having spent billions ensuring the survival of the



The government's latest 'green' economic recovery plan is a cover for policies that benefit polluting big businesses writes **Nick Clark**

YOU HAVE to wonder sometimes if the Tories are playing a game with the climate. How dreadful and damaging can they make their energy plans and still have the nerve to call them green?

The government's latest joke—the Tories' so-called "green" economic recovery plan—is already facing a legal challenge.

Under the cover of "rescuing" the economy from the new economic crisis triggered by coronavirus, the Tories are throwing billions at polluting industries.

They have now launched a formal legal challenge against the government's "green" economic recovery plan on Tuesday of last week.

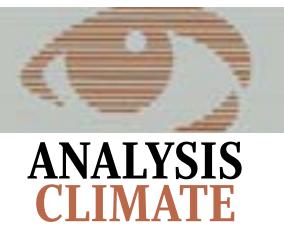
It called the Tories' announcement "no more than a fig leaf for the government's new deal for polluters."

The group says that propping up fossil fuel companies while refusing to fund a green economy puts the Tories in breach of climate agreements and legislation.

These include achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and the commitment in the Paris Agreement to limit temperature increases to 1.5 degrees celsius.

Even these are woefully inadequate measures to avoid catastrophe.

What's more, Plan B says by pursuing disaster the Tories are threatening the human



## Tories' pitiful 'green' plan is completely inadequate



PLAN B held a legal challenge against Heathrow expansion

rights—the right to life and the right to a family—of people across the planet.

In its legal letter to the government, the group said the emergence and spread of diseases such as Covid-19 are one consequence of destructive environmental policies.

It added that the Tories were missing an opportunity to transform the economy, funding green industries and green jobs.

Plan B director Tim Crosland said, "The government can either follow the scientific and economic advice and take a decisive step towards a cleaner, fairer and more sustainable economy, creating vast numbers of new jobs."

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These include achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and the commitment in the Paris Agreement to limit temperature increases to 1.5 degrees celsius.

It seems that Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings are set on choosing the second option, but we can't let that happen."

The Tories won't tackle the climate crisis because it means dismantling the polluting fossil fuel industries at the heart of capitalism.

Confronting that takes more than a legal challenge.

It needs a root and branch transformation of society and a movement of struggle that can take on the power of the fossil fuel bosses that profit from destruction.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is holding its next rebellion on 1 September. For details go to [bit.ly/joinrebellion](http://bit.ly/joinrebellion)

**It doesn't come close to tackling the causes of climate catastrophe**



# Don't rush in to wrong answers to explain Russian interference

Vladimir Putin and the Russian state are ruthless. But, says Tomáš Tengely-Evans, so is Britain. The real story is about competition, cooperation and corruption under capitalism

 **VLADIMIR PUTIN** rules Russia through deception, dirty money and the murder of opponents. And, according to the press, the same methods allow him to control US and British politics too.

An MPs' report showed Russian oligarchs—powerful businessmen—launder their money through London and mingle with the British establishment.

Interference in British politics amounted to “serious distortions in the coverage” of Russian state-funded broadcasters and “bots and trolls” on social media.

But mainstream commentary on Russian interference overstates Putin's reach worldwide and the stability of the regime, which is facing divisions and outbreaks of opposition.

Putin came to power in 1999 with the support of oligarchs, promising to restore order and Russian influence after the collapse of Stalinist Russia. To do it, he's relied on force and fraud.

Genuine opponents, and insiders who've fallen foul of the regime, have been murdered.

## Poisoned

In 2006 Alexander Litvinenko, a Russian spook who had defected to Britain, was poisoned with radioactive polonium in a London sushi restaurant.

Two agents from Russia's GRU military intelligence were likely behind the poisonings of British spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury in 2017.

Then Tory prime minister Theresa May described the attempted murders as an “unlawful use of force”.

But two years earlier British drones



**RUSSIAN OLIGARCHS** mingle with the British establishment in posh parts of London

had assassinated Reyaad Khan and Rahul Amin, two of its own citizens who had joined Isis in Syria.

Then Tory prime minister David Cameron claimed “there was no alternative” while keeping secret the evidence used to justify the killings.

So force is only “unlawful” if perpetrated by the US and Britain's enemies.

Russia has asserted itself militarily in the last decade, although its foreign policy is limited compared

to the Cold War. Online propaganda and cyber warfare go with its military strategy, aimed largely on its “near abroad”.

## Fake

This has included fake news websites backing pro-Russian politicians in Poland and a cyber attack on Ukrainian missile forces.

Cash and social media disinformation goes further afield to the US and Britain, but how effective it is remains unknown.

What oligarch money in London and spook operations do show is how, as Karl Marx said, ruling classes are a band of hostile brothers.

They do business together across borders while their states ruthlessly compete to get ahead of one another.

And in this system of global capitalist rivalry, incompetent and dangerous intelligence agencies fight for their business interests.

Lining up behind our own state and spooks is no solution.

## There's fakery on all sides

 **PR MAN** Vladislav Surkov has specialised in deception. He was Putin's chief adviser until he resigned over “policy differences” in February.

In 2009 Surkov reportedly wrote a novel, under the pseudonym Natan Dubovitsky, about a man who creates fake news for a corrupt politician. He then wrote the preface to one edition under his own name, denouncing its author as an “unoriginal Hamlet-obsessed hack”.

This sort of duplicity is central to Surkov's politics.

Surkov helped to set up Putin's right wing United Russia party.

But he was also rumoured to have financed other parties to its left and right, such as the officially “social democratic” For A Just Russia.

Front groups provide different faces for the Putin regime—and show it's worried about the possibility of real opposition springing up.

Fake news, front groups and intervening in another countries is a very British tactic.

For instance, the British state's Research, Information and Communications Unit (Ricu) tries to build support for British foreign policy among Muslims. One front group, Faith Associates, helped set up training programmes to make sure mosques comply with the Islamophobic “Prevent” policy.

After the invasion of Iraq in 2003, British PR firm Bell Pottinger was paid £412 million to make and distribute fake Jihadist videos. The US and Britain then used the videos to find the IP addresses of those who watched them.

## How the state locks up migrants during pandemic

by SOCIALIST TENDENCY, in the Russian Federation

 AT THE time of the Covid-19 outbreak, the “regime of self-isolation” was imposed in the Russian Federation.

But a large number of migrant labourers from the “near abroad”—the neighbouring post-Soviet countries—mainly those from Central Asia, remained.

Many of them ended up in limbo.

According to Russian

state legislation, citizens of other countries must be deported to their countries of origin if they don't have a visa or other permission to stay in Russia.

### Deportation

Because of pandemic restrictions the borders of the Russian Federation closed, which meant that even the deportation of foreigners did not seem possible.

Instead of supporting migrants, Russian authorities locked them

up for months with no meaningful connection with the outside world and their families.

In this detention, inhuman conditions reign—disgusting food, lack of private space, the impossibility of personal hygiene and constant refusals to provide medical care.

In the city of Nizhny Novgorod people from the Central Asian republics are tired of putting up with this arbitrary treatment by migrant services.

Here, in a special detention centre for foreign citizens awaiting deportation, migrants staged a mass hunger strike and sit-in.

### Expelled

By court order they were supposed to be expelled from the Russian Federation within three weeks.

But this hasn't happened for four to six weeks already, and in some cases eight to nine months.

The strikers' demands

are that they either finally be allowed to return home, or be released on bail.

Our group supports these demands.

We ask for help in disseminating information about what is going on in the Nizhny Novgorod special detention centre and about the situation of migrant labour in Russia in general.

Socialist Tendency is a socialist organisation based in Nizhny Novgorod. Their website (in Russian) is at [bit.ly/STRussia](http://bit.ly/STRussia)

# Sunak sets his sights on pension schemes

Plans to calculate pension rises differently will hit over ten million people, says **Charlie Kimber**

**MORE THAN** ten million people with pensions linked to their final salary face losing tens of thousands of pounds.

Proposals to change the way annual pension increases are calculated will leave people £30,000 worse off on average.

And the hit could be even greater according to new analysis.

Currently, most people receiving income from "defined benefit"-style pensions in the private sector have annual rises in payments linked to the retail prices index (RPI).

This measures the rise in the cost of a pre-determined basket of goods, including housing costs.

But the RPI measure consistently shows a higher rate of inflation than ministers like to pretend is the case.

The Office for National Statistics has set up a consultation on "reforms" that could see workplace pensions rise more slowly each year.

The annual measured rate of inflation would be lower, on average, by 1 percentage point a year, according to the consultation document.

Investment Insight, an asset manager, has calculated the cost of linking defined benefit pension increases to CPIH, or the Consumer Prices Index with Housing costs.

## Income

It said, "A member of a defined benefit pension scheme who is retiring at age 65 on a starting income of £20,000 could lose in excess of £30,000 over the course of their retirement."

Barnett Waddingham, an actuarial consultancy, said someone aged 50, with an RPI-linked pension paying £10,000 annually from age 60, would have previously expected to receive about £500,000 in total if they lived to the average age of 90.

If the proposed changes go ahead, total payments would be cut to around £425,000.

"A change to CPI from RPI would benefit those who make payments based on the value of the index—such as pension schemes," the

## BACK STORY

**The Tories want to change how pension rises are calculated**

- Their plans would change private final salary schemes from being based on the RPI rate of inflation
- If the proposals go through, people will be left £30,000 worse off on average
- And new analysis shows that the losses could be even greater
- Bosses and pension fund executives would benefit
- We need resistance to the move

Institute and Faculty of Actuaries said.

"However, those who receive benefits linked to the value of the index will be more likely to receive lower future benefits. Changes to the measure of inflation used will create winners and losers in all cases, sometimes very unevenly."

It will be bosses and pension fund executives who win, workers and pensioners who lose.

Inflation uprating for private and public sector defined benefit schemes has traditionally been RPI-linked. But since 2011, public sector pensions have been linked to CPI, which typically rises more slowly.

However, about 75 percent of Britain's 5,500 private sector schemes—with more than ten million members—still use RPI to uprate pensions.

The move away from RPI was signalled in chancellor Rishi Sunak's budget in March. The GMB union said, "This might be presented as a technical issue. But if this goes through it will end up costing millions of workers and pensioners their full, hard-earned compensation."

That was right. It's time to fight the move.



## On other pages...

Thrown on the scrap heap by the Tories >> Pages 10&11



PENSIONS ARE not a 'gift' but deferred pay—striking back in 2011

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## Sturgeon might sound good, but the virus has been a disaster in Scotland

by **MARK BROWN**

SCOTLAND'S FIRST Minister Nicola Sturgeon has received glowing reviews for her handling of the Covid-19 crisis.

While Boris Johnson tried, and failed, to force children back to school in England, Scotland's schools remained closed.

Sturgeon announced a careful, phase-by-phase easing of lockdown restrictions in Scotland.

On 2 July, the Scottish National Party (SNP) leader announced that face coverings would become mandatory in shops in Scotland from 10 July.

Johnson's attempt to follow suit in England led to the farce of cabinet ministers contradicting each other over the policy.

## Approval

A Sunday Times poll of Scottish opinion on 5 July found that Sturgeon's approval rating on Covid stood at plus 60 percent. Johnson's was at minus 39 percent.

The same poll found that support for Scottish independence was up five points at 54 percent.

Fear of growing support for independence is why Johnson

scurried up to Scotland last week to defend the "sheer might" of the Union.

Sturgeon's leadership is better than the shambles presided over by Johnson. However, the Scottish government's supposed "success" on Covid is more myth than reality.

For a start, the reason the SNP administration didn't even consider trying to reopen schools in early June was nothing to do with disagreeing with Johnson.

It was because Scotland's schools always begin their summer holidays in June, weeks before schools in England.

In fact, having announced that Scottish schools would return with a mixture of face-to-face and online teaching on 11 August, the SNP did a U-turn.

In late June, SNP education cabinet secretary John Swinney said schools would return with full time, face-to-face teaching, leading the EIS union to raise safety concerns.

Swinney claims the policy shift was due to better than expected progress on Covid.

However, this policy change is actually about placating big business. Bosses want schools back

so workers can return to work.

This should come as no surprise. The SNP is very good at appearing like a centre-left, social democratic party when it comes to social policy. Yet it remains wedded to pro-market, capitalist economics.

## Nations

The SNP government was committed to the same "four nations action plan" as the Tories until 10 May.

Consequently, Scotland, like England, locked down too late, failed dismally on testing, tracking and tracing and allowed Covid to run rife through care homes.

According to the Scottish government's figures, last week Scotland had suffered an appalling 4,856 excess deaths compared with the same period last year.

Almost half are believed to have been in care homes.

The SNP has been in government at Holyrood for 13 years. Yet it has failed to bring care homes back into public hands.

Covid-19 has been a disaster in Scotland. This cannot be glossed over just because Nicola Sturgeon communicates better than Boris Johnson.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# Bin workers strike for pay and respect

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**BIN WORKERS** in south London are taking the fight against poverty pay to the outsourcing giant Serco.

The Unite union members in Bexley were set to hold five days of strikes this week and next.

They planned walkouts on Thursday and Friday this week and on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of next week.

Workers are demanding pay of £13 an hour, a wage similar to bin workers in the neighbouring borough of Greenwich.

At present their pay is around £4 an hour less—and below the London Living Wage.

## Bullying

The union says workers are also angry over a “bullying culture”.

The walkouts are part of a long-running dispute.

The workers struck for a day and a half in March, but suspended their action over pay as the pandemic was taking off.

Nevertheless, union officials said the action had been “rock solid” and saw impressive picketing that



BEXLEY WORKERS voting for action

PICTURE: WILLIE HOWARD ON FACEBOOK

stopped bosses’ efforts to undermine it.

This forced Serco to agree to guarantees over sick pay and health and safety during the coronavirus lockdown.

But bosses backed out from it as soon as they could.

Ruth Hydon, a Unite regional official, said, “Serco agreed to pay all our members sick pay for Covid-19 related absences. The outsourcer then reneged on this and did not pay about 30 of our members properly

in their April pay packets. The latest industrial action is because Serco have failed to offer our members a decent wage.

“Their current paltry offer is £10.15 an hour—rejected by our members—is even below the London Living Wage, currently £10.75.

“It has also been rejected because Serco has failed to deal with an insidious bullying culture at the Crayford depot.”

The Tories have lauded bin

workers—along with many others in local government—as “key workers” who kept going into work during the pandemic.

Having clapped them, they’re now slapping them in the face with further attacks on pay and terms and conditions.

Trade unionists need to build solidarity for the Bexley bin workers in their workplaces and union branches.

Send messages of support to [@UniteLondonEast](#) on Twitter

## UNIVERSITIES

## Keep up the fights on jobs, pay, equality

**UCU UNION** members were expecting this week to hear the results of their consultative ballot on the employers’ offer in the “Four Fights” dispute.

The union is calling for rejection of the deal after pressure from its members.

UCU members held 14 days of strikes in 74 universities during the most recent wave of action.

They are fighting for equal pay, sustainable workloads, an end to casual contracts and a real-terms pay rise.

Workers are demanding equal pay for women and black workers.

And a swathe of planned job cuts as university bosses seek to use the virus crisis to push attacks means workloads will get worse.

The UCU Left organisation said, “A successful rejection of the offer will not, of course,



Powerful strikes took place earlier this year

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

lead to an immediate return to industrial action. But it would be a clear marker to employers that UCU is serious about defending members and higher education.

“It would also boost the confidence to fight in those branches facing immediate cuts if the members know the union has their backs.

“Finally, it would also start to turn around the defeatism in much of the leadership of UCU that thinks all we can do is manage the decline of the sector.”

Elections for two places on the UCU national executive began this week. The UCU Left is calling for a vote for Marian Meyer (Vice president) and Peter Evans (LGBT+).

## TOWER HAMLETS

## More action on contracts?

**COUNCIL WORKERS** in east London are hoping to strike again against plans to undermine critical parts of their terms and conditions.

Around 1,500 Unison members in Tower Hamlets could strike for five days from 10 August—if their union agrees to the action.

Strikers are following up six days of walkouts taken in June and July, where defiant picket lines were held.

Workers are engaged in a long-running battle with the “Tower Rewards” programme, which attacks their redundancy pay, flexitime scheme, disciplinary agreement and travel allowance.

Disgracefully, the Labour-run council sacked and re-employed the workers on 1 July, as part of their drive to force the new, worse contracts on workers.

## CIVIL SERVICE

## Tate gallery must use its £1.5bn handout to save jobs

**DOZENS** of PCS union members protested outside the Tate Modern art gallery in London as it reopened on Monday of this week.

Workers there are set to ballot for strikes against bosses’ plans to sack more than 200 of them.

Tate Enterprises, which operates retail, catering and publishing services told workers in mid-June of restructuring plans aimed at saving £1 million.

It is pushing ahead with the plans despite the fact that the Tate is expected to receive some £7 million of a £1.5 billion bailout package for the arts and culture sector.

The PCS says that just 10 percent of this money would save hundreds of jobs and protect the poorest paid workers.

But bosses have said they won’t spend any of this additional money on Tate Enterprises and that the

redundancies will go ahead.

The PCS is demanding the Tories provide more money—and that Tate bosses must use the money already given to save jobs.

Workers—mostly retail staff on part time or casual contracts—have voted to strike by 93 percent on a 99 percent turnout in a consultative ballot.

The result of their formal strike ballot was set to be announced on Monday of next week.

Send messages of support to [culturesector@pcs.org.uk](mailto:culturesector@pcs.org.uk)

**FURTHER** protests were set to take place on Saturday by workers and trade union branches from across arts venues.

They are protesting against mass redundancies.

Activists planned to gather at 12 noon outside the National Theatre on London’s South Bank.

## FAST FOOD

## Pizza workers win wages

**WORKERS** at Papa John’s Pizza outlet in Sheffield took action last weekend to win back the wages they were due.

Workers say they have not been paid for some shifts worked during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Sheffield Needs A Pay Rise group, Bfawu union members and others protested outside one of the sites to support the workers

and send a strong message to Sheffield employers that this isn’t acceptable.

Placards included, “Pauper John’s,” and “We won’t settle for crusts, we want the whole pizzeria”.

As a result of the action, the current franchise owner promised to pay all money owed this week.

Workers vowed more protests if the money wasn’t forthcoming.

## AVIATION



Protesting in Southend, Essex

## Fight against Easyjet cuts

**EASYJET** WORKERS in Newcastle, Southend and Stansted held protests last week after voting no confidence in their top boss.

A ballot of more than 3,000 Unite union cabin crew members at the airline was 99 percent in favour of the no confidence motion.

The Balpa pilots’ union also held a similar ballot which also returned a near unanimous vote of no confidence in EasyJet

chief operating officer Peter Bellew.

Unite members are angry that while their jobs and incomes at the airline are under attack, EasyJet paid £174 million in dividends to shareholders at the start of the Covid-19 crisis.

The company has also secured a government funded loan of £600 million yet is pressing on with a large-scale cuts and closure programme.



HEALTH WORKERS need more from the government than rounds of clapping

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# NHS WORKERS IN A PAY REVOLT

by TOMÁS TENGELY-EVANS

**HEALTH WORKERS** are in revolt over the Tory refusal to give a pay rise to hundreds of thousands of people who work in the NHS.

Activists were set to organise a march from Guys and St Thomas' Hospital in south London to Downing Street on Wednesday this week.

And pay protests are planned in 20 towns and cities across Britain on Saturday 8 August. They will target the Tories but also the devolved governments in Edinburgh and Cardiff that determine NHS pay.

## Sections

Some sections of public sector workers were given paltry pay rises on Tuesday of last week—but not most health workers.

Jordan, an occupational therapist, said she “just can’t believe it after what we’ve been through” in the coronavirus crisis. “It’s been a really bad time,” she told Socialist Worker. “We’re very tired and burned out and now there is a sense of dread that there’s

going to be another wave of patients coming through.”

She added, “Everyone is absolutely fuming about it—there’s a real mood to stand up for ourselves.”

The Tories claim that health workers are still in a three-year pay deal, signed in 2018, amounting to a 6.5 percent increase.

But the deal was mis-sold by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Unison union leaderships, with many workers receiving less than they were led to believe.

Mark, a nurse in Greater Manchester, explained that it also “came off the back of ten years of austerity”.

Workers’ anger has been fuelled by the Tory hypocrisy of taking part in the claps for the NHS during the lockdown.

Now workers are demanding a 12.5 percent pay rise this year, not at some indefinite point in the future.

Jerry, a frontline ambulance worker, says Boris Johnson has “no respect for the hard work of NHS workers” and that it’s an “insult beyond belief.” “The public do not understand what



UCH hospital workers protest on Workers' Memorial Day

**“The public don’t know what we experienced in the NHS**

we in the NHS experienced,” he told Socialist Worker.

“Boris Johnson did not provide us with PPE protective equipment, we were down to a few minutes supply of PPE.

“I was going from one mask to the next, literally travelling six miles to get another mask to see another patient.”

“Boris has killed thousands of citizens through his utter incompetence.” He added, “I’ve had three

colleagues that I know die, I’ve had colleagues get so ill they will never come back to work.

“I’ve had to leave people at home that I know that would die—I feel like I have killed people.”

Jerry says that workers are furious at Tory attempts to deflect blame with Johnson saying “he didn’t know how bad it would be”.

## Load

“What a load of bullshit,” he said. “I was sitting there in January and February watching doctors in Spain and Italy.

“They were saying, ‘Track, trace, mask up, it’s coming your way.’”

Jerry feels workers’ and patients’ health was sacrificed because Tory cuts had hammered the NHS. “So we have a system to classify how unwell someone is to take them into hospital,” he explained.

“Normally if someone has a score of 1, I would have to take people in. We were going up to 7—which is high risk—before taking someone into hospital for about a

month during the height of coronavirus.

“These people were staying at home and dying. A colleague would turn up to the homes of people we had seen and who had now died.”

Jerry said that “virtually all of us are feeling numb” and some needed PTSD treatment.

Trade union leaders need to mobilise the anger and organise strikes in a fight against Tory government. As Jerry said, “If we had a bit of leadership from our unions, we would mutiny overnight.”

A fight over the NHS can win mass support and force the governments to cough up.

The health pay revolt can be a launchpad for the wider revolt against the Tories.

● Some workers’ names have been changed.

● On Saturday 8 August there are demonstrations in towns and cities including London, Manchester, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Basildon, Leeds, Nottingham, Inverness, Newcastle, Plymouth, and Cardiff. For details go to **NHS Workers Say NO! to Public Sector pay inequality** on Facebook.